

The Yengishiki



**SEVEN ANCIENT SACRED
SHINTO RITUALS**

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THE YENGISHIKI

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THE HARVEST RITUAL

I declare in the presence of the sovereign gods of the Harvest, If the sovereign gods will bestow, in many-bundled spikes and in luxuriant spikes, the late-ripening harvest which they will bestow, the late-ripening harvest which will be produced by the dripping of foam from the arms, and by drawing the mud together between the opposing thighs, then I will fulfil their praises by presenting the first-fruits in a thousand ears, and in many hundred ears; raising high the beer-jars, filling and ranging in rows the bellies of the beer-jars, I will present them in juice and in grain. As to things which grow in the great field plain – sweet herbs and bitter herbs; as to things which dwell in the blue sea plain things wide of fin, and things narrow of fin, down to the weeds of the offing, and weeds of the shore; and as to Clothes, with bright cloth, glittering cloth, soft cloth, and coarse cloth will I fulfil their praises. And having furnished a white horse, a white boar, and a white cock, and the various kinds of things in the presence of the sovereign gods of the Harvest, I fulfil their praises by presenting the great Offerings of the sovereign Grand-child's augustness.

THE RITUAL FOR THE WIND-GODS

I declare in the presence of the sovereign gods, whose praises are fulfilled at Tatsuta.

Because they had not allowed, firstly the five sorts of grain which the Sovereign Grand-child's augustness, who ruled the great country of many islands at Shikishima, took with ruddy countenance as his long and lasting food, and the things produced by the people, down to the least leaf of the herbs, to ripen, and had spoilt them not for one year, or for two years, but for continuous years, he deigned to command: "As to the Heart of the god which shall come forth in the divinings of all the men who are learned in things, declare what god it is."

Whereupon the men learned in things divined with their divinings, but they declared that no Heart of a god appears.

When he had heard this, the Sovereign Grand-child's augustness deigned to conjure them, saying: "I sought to fulfil their praises as heavenly temples and country temples, without forgetting or omitting, and have so acted, but let the god, whatever god he be, that has prevented the things produced by the people of the region under Heaven from ripening, and has spoilt them, make known his Heart."

Hereupon they made the Sovereign Grand-child's augustness to know in a great dream, and made him to know their names, saying:

"Our names, who have prevented the things made by the people of the region under Heaven from ripening and have spoilt them, by visiting them with bad winds and rough waters, are Heaven's Pillars augustness and Country's Pillars augustness." And they made him to know, saying: "If for the Offerings which shall be set up in our presence there be furnished various sorts of Offerings, as to Clothes, bright cloth, glittering cloth, soft cloth, and coarse cloth, and the five kinds of things, a shield, a spear, and a horse furnished with a saddle; if our house be fixed at Wonu, in Tachinu, at Tatsuta, in a place where the morning sun is opposite, and the evening sun is hidden, and praises be fulfilled in our presence, we will bless and ripen the things produced by the people of the region under Heaven, firstly the five sorts of grain, down to the least leaf of the herbs."

Therefore hear, all ye wardens and vergers, by declaring in the presence of the sovereign gods that, having fixed the House-pillars in the place which the sovereign gods had taught by words and made known, in order to fulfil praises in the presence of the sovereign gods, the Sovereign Grandchild's augustness has caused his great Offerings to be lifted up and brought, and has fulfilled their praises, sending the princes and counselors as his messengers.

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THE FIRE RITUAL

I declare with the great ritual, the Heavenly ritual, which was bestowed on him at the time when, by the Word of the Sovereign's dear progenitor and progenitrix, who divinely remain in the plain of high Heaven, they bestowed on him the region under Heaven, saying: "Let the Sovereign Grandchild's augustness tranquilly rule over the country of fresh spikes which flourishes in the midst of the reed-moor, as a peaceful region."

When the two pillars, the divine Izanagi and Izanami's augustness, younger sister and elder brother, had intercourse, and she had deigned to bear the many tens of countries of the countries, and the many tens of islands of the islands, and had deigned to bear the many hundred myriads of gods, she also deigned to bear her dear youngest child of all, the Fire-producer god, and her hidden parts being burnt, she hid in the rocks, and said: "My dear elder brother's augustness, deign not to look upon me for seven nights of nights and seven days of sunshine"; but when, before the seven days were fulfilled, he looked, thinking her remaining hidden to be strange, she deigned to say: "My hidden parts were burnt when I bore fire." At such a time I said, "My dear elder brother's augustness, deign not to look upon me, but you violently looked upon me "; and after saying, "My dear elder brother's augustness shall rule the upper country; I will rule the lower country," she deigned to hide in the rocks, and having come to the flat hill of darkness, she thought and said: "I have come hither, having born and left a bad-hearted child in the upper country, ruled over by my illustrious elder brother's augustness," and going back she bore other children. Having born the Water-goddess, the gourd, the river-weed, and the clay-hill maiden, four sorts of things, she taught them with words, and made them to know, saying: "If the heart of this bad-hearted child becomes violent, let the Water-goddess take the gourd, and the clay-hill maiden take the river-weed, and pacify him."

In consequence of this I fulfil his praises, and say that for the things set up, so that he may deign not to be awfully quick of heart in their great place of the Sovereign Grandchild's augustness, there are provided bright cloth, glittering cloth, soft cloth, and coarse cloth, and the five kinds of things; as to things which dwell in the blue sea plain, there are things wide of fin and things narrow of fin, down to the weeds of the offing and weeds of the shore; as to liquor, raising high the beer-jars, filling and ranging in rows the bellies of the beer-jars, piling the offerings up, even to rice in grain and rice in ear, like a range of hills, I fulfil his praises with the great ritual, the heavenly ritual.

THE RITUAL FOR EVIL SPIRITS

I (the diviner), declare: When by the word of the progenitor and progenitrix, who divinely remaining in the plain of high Heaven, deigned to make the beginning of things, they divinely deigned to assemble the many hundred myriads of gods in the high city of Heaven, and deigned divinely to take counsel in council, saying: "When we cause our Sovereign Grandchild's augustness, to leave Heaven's eternal seat, to cleave a path with might through Heaven's manifold clouds, and to descend from Heaven, with orders tranquilly to rule the country of fresh spikes, which flourishes in the midst of the reed-moor as a peaceful country, what god shall we send first to divinely sweep away, sweep away and subdue the gods who are turbulent in the country of fresh spikes "; all the gods pondered and declared: "You shall send Amenohohi's augustness, and subdue them," declared they. Wherefore they sent him down from Heaven, but he did not declare an answer; and having next sent Takemikuma's augustness, he also, obeying his father's words, did not declare an answer. Ame-no-waka-hiko also, whom they sent, did not declare an answer, but immediately perished by the calamity of a bird on high. Wherefore they pondered afresh by the word of the Heavenly gods, and having deigned to send down from Heaven the two pillars of gods, Futsunushi and Takemika-dzuchi's augustness, who having deigned divinely to sweep away, and sweep away, and deigned divinely to soften, and soften the gods who were turbulent, and silenced the rocks, trees, and the least leaf of herbs likewise that bad spoken, they caused the Sovereign Grandchild's augustness to descend from Heaven.

I fulfil your praises, saying: As to the Offerings set up, so that the sovereign gods who come into the heavenly house of the Sovereign Grandchild's augustness, which, after he had fixed upon as a peaceful country – the country of great Yamato where the sun is high, as the center of the countries of the four quarters bestowed upon him when he was thus sent down from Heaven – stoutly planting the house-pillars on the bottom-most rocks, and exalting the cross-beams to the plain of high Heaven, the builders had made for his shade from the Heavens and shade from the sun, and wherein he will tranquilly rule the country as a peaceful country may, without deigning to be turbulent, deigning to be fierce, and deigning to hurt, knowing, by virtue of their divinity, the things which were begun in the plain of high Heaven, deigning to correct with Divine-correcting and Great-correcting, remove hence out to the clean places of the mountain streams which look far away over the four quarters, and rule them as their own place. Let the sovereign gods tranquilly take with clear hearts, as peaceful offerings and sufficient offerings the great offerings which I set up, piling them upon the tables like a range of hills, providing bright cloth, glittering cloth, soft cloth, and coarse cloth, as a thing to see plain in – a mirror: as things to play with-beads: as things to shoot off with – a bow and arrows: as things to strike and cut with – a sword: as a thing which gallops out – a horse; as to liquor – raising high the beer-jars, filling and ranging in rows the bellies of the beer-jars, with grains of rice and ears; as to the things which dwell in the hills things soft of hair, and things rough of hair; as to the things which grow in the great field plain – sweet herbs and bitter herbs; as to the things which dwell in the blue sea plain things broad of fin and things narrow of fin, down to weeds of the offing and weeds of the short, and without deigning to be turbulent, deigning to be fierce, and deigning to hurt, remove out to the wide and clean places of the mountain streams, and by virtue of their divinity be tranquil.

THE ROAD-GODS' RITUAL

He (the priest) says: "I declare in the presence of the sovereign gods, who like innumerable piles of rocks, sit closing up the way in the multitudinous road-forkings. . . fulfil your praises by declaring your names, Youth and Maiden of the Many Road-forkings and Come-no-further Gate, and say: for the offerings set up so that you may prevent the servants of the monarch from being poisoned by and agreeing with the things which shall come roughly acting and hating from the Root-country, the Bottom-country, that you may guard the bottom of the gate when they come from the bottom, guard the top when they come from the top, guarding with nightly guard and with daily guard, and, may praise them peacefully take the great offerings which are set up by piling them up like a range of hills – that is to say, providing bright cloth, etc., and sitting closing-up the way like innumerable piles of rock in the multitudinous road-forkings, deign to praise the Sovereign Grandchild's augustness eternally and unchangingly, and to bless his age as a luxuriant age."

RITUALS TO THE SUN-GODDESS

He (the priest envoy) says: "Hear all of you, ministers of the gods and sanctifiers of offerings, the great ritual, the Heavenly ritual, declared in the great presence of the From-Heaven-shining-great deity, whose praises are fulfilled by setting up the stout pillars of the great house, and exalting the cross-beam to the plain of high Heaven at the sources of the Isuzu river at Udji in Watarahi."

He says: "It is the Sovereign's great Word. Hear all of you, ministers of the gods and sanctifiers of offerings, the fulfilling of praises on this seventeenth day of the sixth moon of this year, as the morning sun goes up in glory, of the Oho-Nakatomi, who-having abundantly piled up like a range of hills the tribute thread and sanctified liquor and food presented as of usage by the people of the deity's houses attributed to her in the three departments and in various countries and places, so that she deign to bless his (the Mikado's) life as a long life and his age as a luxuriant age eternally and unchangingly as multitudinous piles of rock; may deign to bless the children who are born to him, and deigning to cause to flourish the five kinds of grain which the men of – a hundred functions and the peasants of the countries in the four quarters of the region under Heaven long and peacefully cultivate and eat, and guarding and benefiting them deign to bless them – is hidden by the great offering-wands."

I declare in the great presence of the From-Heaven-shining-great deity who sits in Ise. Because the Sovereign great goddess bestows on him the countries of the four quarters over which her glance extends, as far as the limit where Heaven stands up like a wall, as far as the bounds where the country stands up distant, as far as the limit where the blue clouds spread flat, as far as the bounds where the white clouds lie away fallen-the blue sea plain as far as the limit whither come the prows of the ships without drying poles or paddles, the ships which continuously crowd on the great sea plain, and the roads which men travel by land, as far as the limit whither come the horses' hoofs, with the baggage-cords tied tightly, treading the uneven rocks and tree-roots and standing up continuously in a long path without a break – making the narrow countries wide and the hilly countries plain, and as it were drawing together the distant countries by throwing many tens of ropes over them – he will pile up the first-fruits like a range of hills in the great presence of the Sovereign great goddess, and will peacefully enjoy the remainder.

THE PURIFICATION RITUAL

[The ritual opens by calling upon the assembled princes of the Mikado's family, the ministers of State, and all other officials, to listen, in words which are a modern addition after the establishment of a form of administration modeled on that of the Chinese. To this succeeds a second enumeration of the Sovereign's servants, according to the old division, into scarf-wearing companies (women attendants), sash-wearing companies (cooks), quiver-bearing and sword-bearing companies (guards), with which begins the genuine ancient text. The nature of the Mikado's title to rule over the land is then stated, as in the ritual of the gods of pestilence, already quoted, after which we have a list of the offenses of which the nation is to be purged.]

Amongst the various sorts of offenses which may be committed in ignorance or out of negligence by Heaven's increasing people, who shall come into being in the country, which the Sovereign Grandchild's augustness, hiding in the fresh residence, built by stoutly planting the house-pillars on the bottom-most rocks, and exalting the cross-beams to the plain of high Heaven, as his shade from the Heavens and shade from the sun, shall tranquilly rule as a peaceful country, namely, the country of great Yamato, where the sun is seen on high, which be fixed upon as a peaceful country, as the center of the countries of the four quarters thus bestowed upon him – breaking the ridges, filling up watercourses, opening sluices, doubly sowing, planting stakes, flaying alive, flaying backward, and dunging; many of such offenses are distinguished as Heavenly offenses, and as earthly offenses; cutting living flesh, cutting dead flesh, leprosy, proud flesh, the offense committed with one's own mother, the offense committed with one's own child, the offense committed with mother and child, the offense committed with child and mother, the offense committed with beasts, calamities of crawling worms, calamities of a god on high, calamities of birds on high, the offenses of killing beasts and using incantations; many of such offenses may be disclosed.

[The high priest then arranges the sacrifices, and, turning round to the assembled company, waves before them a sort of broom made of grass, to symbolize the sweeping away of their offenses. At this point occurs in the original a direction to the priest to repeat " the great ritual, the Heavenly ritual." Several versions of what seems to be the missing document have been discovered, and it turns out to have been a short address to all the gods, calling upon them to bear the remaining part of the principal ritual, after which the original proceeds:]

When he has thus repeated it, the Heavenly gods will push open Heaven's eternal gates, and cleaving a path with might through the manifold clouds of Heaven, will hear; and the country gods, ascending to the tops of the high mountains, and to the tops of the low hills, and tearing asunder the mists of the high mountains, and the mists of the low hills, will bear.

And when they have thus heard, the Maiden-of-Descent-into-the-Current, who dwells in the current of the swift stream which boils down the ravines from the tops of the high mountains, and the tops of the low hills, shall carry out to the great sea plain the offenses which are cleared away and purified, so that there be no remaining offense; like as Sbinato's wind blows apart the manifold clouds of Heaven, as the morning wind and the evening wind blow away the morning mist and the evening mist, as the great ships which lie on the shore of the great port loosen their prows, and loosen their sterns to push out into the great sea plain; as the trunks of the forest trees, far and near, are cleared away by the sharp sickle, the sickle forged with fire; so that there cease to be any offense called an offense in the court of the Sovereign Grandchild's augustness to begin with, and in the countries of the four quarters of the region under Heaven.

And when she thus carries them out and away, the deity called the Maiden-of-the-Swift-cleansing, who dwells in the multitudinous meetings of the sea-waters, the multitudinous currents of rough sea-waters shall gulp them down.

And when she has thus gulped them down, the lord of the Breath-blowing-place, who dwells in the Breath-blowing-place, shall utterly blow them away with his breath to the Root-country, the Bottom-country.

And when he has thus blown them away, the deity called the Maiden-of-Swift-Banishment, who dwells in the Root-country, the Bottom-country, shall completely banish them, and get rid of them.

And when they have thus been got rid of, there shall from this day onward be no offense which is called offense, with regard to the men of the offices who serve in the court of the Sovereign, nor in the four quarters of

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the region under Heaven.

[Then the high priest says:]

Hear all of you how he leads forth the horse as a thing that erects its ears toward the plain of high Heaven, and deigns to sweep away and purify with the general purification, as the evening sun goes down on the last day of the watery moon of this year.

O diviners of the four countries, take the sacrifices away out of the river highway, and sweep them away.